



## Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services

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**BILL: HOUSE BILL 43**

**POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION**

**EXPLANATION:** Section 2 of this bill provides that the eligibility criteria for the Violence Prevention Initiative under which high risk offenders are subject to increased collaborative supervision of the Division of Parole and Probation and local law enforcement agencies be expanded to include all age groups.

### COMMENTS:

- The Department oversees the Division of Parole and Probation (DPP) which supervises individuals within the community who are court ordered to community supervision or who have been paroled by the Maryland Parole Commission.
- Pursuant to the Justice Reinvestment Act, DPP uses evidence based, validated risk and needs screening instruments to classify individuals under supervision upon intake and to determine the appropriate level of supervision to provide for each case.
- Offenders with the highest risk of reoffending are placed into a specialized caseload, referred to as the Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI). VPI caseload ratios are inherently lower than general caseload ratios as they involve a more intense level of supervision.
- Age is one of the factors that the validated, evidence based risk and needs assessments take into consideration when determining appropriate supervision level. Other factors include criminal history and previous arrests for weapons.
- In fiscal year 2019 approximately 1,407 offenders under supervision were classified as VPI. The containment-model approach to supervising VPI offenders involves increased contacts between the offender and agent in conjunction with immediate and consistent responses to violations of supervision. In order to accomplish this, DPP has established the VPI caseload size at 30:1 (active cases to agent) ratio.
- HB 43 would require DPP to overhaul its validated, evidence based risk and needs assessments to remove age as a factor when determining supervision level.

- If enacted, this legislation will transfer 6,929 offenders currently on supervision who would qualify for VPI supervision and will raise the caseload averages for VPI agents well beyond the 30:1 ratio, thereby making it extremely difficult to provide the intensive supervision these high risk offenders require.

**CONCLUSION:** The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests the Committee considers this information as it deliberates on House Bill 43.